

Black Cockatoo Crisis: An Education Resource

Policy, Advocacy and Conservation

Curriculum (Year 9 Civics & Citizenship):

Develop knowledge and understanding relating to government policy and how individuals and groups participate in and contribute to civic life. Extend competencies and skills in: analysis, synthesis and interpretation; communication and reflection; problem-solving and decision-making, and; questioning and research.

Objective:

Students will be able to identify and explain competing pressures in conservation versus industrial or residential development. Students will be able to analyse the importance of advocacy, protests, and political activism to policy development for conservation.

Task/Assessment:

Students will examine and compare 2 cases: the situation documented in the Black Cockatoo Crisis film, and the story of saving the Franklin River Dam in Tasmania. For each case students will s identify:

- the issue/situation (what is in contention);
- the competing interests/needs;
- advocacy or activism efforts; and
- government policy.

Students will then participate in a group discussion to discuss their comparisons and evaluate the available evidence to draw conclusions about the importance of advocacy, protests, and political activism to conservation.

Key Points:

- Identifying competing interests in conservation versus industrial or residential development.
- The significance of gaining Endangered status for species or World Heritage listing for areas under threat.
- The role of advocacy, protests, and political activism in promoting sustainability

Preparation:

- Watch the *Black Cockatoo Crisis* documentary film either as a school, in a preceding class or as homework. Access options include:
SBS On Demand <https://www.sbs.com.au/ondemand/movie/black-cockatoo-crisis/2295518787622>
Clickview <https://launch.clickview.net/open?AppLink=video:79607552>
Vimeo <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/blackcockatoocrisis>

Introduction (Think-Pair-Share)

- Discuss the following statement (slide 6) in a with a partner or small group:
“Advocacy and protests have no impact on government decisions.”
 - Do you think this statement is true or false?
 - Why? What is your reasoning?
 - Can you back up your belief with any evidence?
- Discuss as a class and record the number of ‘agree’ and ‘disagree’ and write it on the board in a corner somewhere (slide 7).

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Content:

Work through (slides 8 – 16) explaining how policy is developed in Australia and where advocacy and activism is involved. Then work through Case 1 (slides 18 – 23) as a class, then task students to explore Case 2 (slides 24 – 49) using their notes from the film either in groups or individually. You can choose to either:

- Follow the lesson steps below and move through with the class, or
- ask students to work through the slides themselves and make notes to your requirements, or
- ask student to read through the slides then facilitate a discussion after a set time.

Case 1 (Slides 18 to 23):

- Examine the example of the successful Franklin Dam advocacy campaign.
<https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/franklin-dam-greens>

In 1978 the Tasmanian Hydro-Electric Commission—with approval from the Tasmanian Government—announced plans to build a dam on the Franklin River to generate hydro-electricity.

Tasmanians were sharply divided over the proposal. Many supported the project for the economic benefits it would bring to the state, while others opposed it because of the damage it would cause to an environmentally sensitive wilderness area.

Protesters opposing the dam mounted one of the largest environmental campaigns in Australian history. Actions to protect this wilderness area included a large and sustained non-violent protest campaign against the dam, and World Heritage listing of the area. The newly elected Hawke Labor government intervened and the project was abandoned in 1983.

- In small groups or as a class discuss the following questions. Scaffold questioning from simple identification of issues to proposing advocacy strategies. Monitor student performance through group discussions and participation.

How important do you think the environmental protest campaign was to the decision not to build the dam?

The areas affected by the dam proposal gained World Heritage listing during the campaign. Why was this listing significant?

Federal and state governments need to consider competing interests when they approve a project that has large economic benefits but a negative impact on the environment. *What competing issues can you identify in this case?*

- After considering the [Franklin Dam case](#) review the class position on the statement do a new hand count of agree vs disagree for the impact of advocacy & protest statement.
- Has the proportion of agree vs disagree changed?
- **Fact:** the statement “*Advocacy and protests have no impact on government decisions.*” is a common misconception, and a source of apathy in our community.

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Case 2 (slides 24 – 49):

- Break students into groups to analyse the case of Black Cockatoo conservation in Western Australia based on the evidence provided in the Black Cockatoo Crisis documentary.
- Ask students to:
 - Identify all of the *competing interests* present in the film (mining, urban development, agriculture, water supply).
 - Identify the different examples of *advocacy and activism* represented
 - Discuss the *Policy** relevant to this situation and problems they can see with how it is being implemented in the context of what [Professor Hans Lambers](#) said: “*the Baudin & Carnaby are endangered, and Forest Red Tailed Cockatoo are threatened. All three are protected under environmental legislation but these laws are failing to safeguard these species.*” (BCC 06.25)
(*[EPBC Act](#), [WA Biodiversity Conservation Act](#), [Threatened Species Strategy 2021–2031](#))
- Ask students to discuss/consider/answer these questions:
 - *What examples of advocacy and political activism are shown in the Black Cockatoo Crisis film?*
 - *How could/will these effect policy?*
 - *How important is the community effort in protecting these threatened species?*
 - *Can you back up your points with any evidence?*

Conclusion:

- Ask students to share their conclusions with the class
- Summarize the key points discussed in the lesson
- Provide students with the ‘Fill in the gaps & word find’ worksheet to use as revision.

Extension Activity/Resources:

- Fill in the gaps to create a Civics & Citizenship glossary
- Complete the word find containing terms from the Civics & Citizenship glossary.
- Create poster illustrating the impact of advocacy and community involvement on conservation issues.
- Write a short paragraph reflecting on your own feelings about the ways human activities impact on biodiversity, and what you wish could be done.

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Year 9 Civics & Citizenship Curriculum Links

Knowledge and Understanding:

- The process through which government policy is shaped and developed, including the role of Prime Minister (ACHCK103)
- The influence of a range of media, including social media, in shaping identities and attitudes to diversity (ACHCK080)
- How and why individuals and groups, including religious groups, participate in and contribute to civic life (ACHCK079)

Competencies and Skills

Analysis, synthesis and interpretation:

- Critically evaluate information and ideas from a range of sources in relation to issues presented in Black Cockatoo Crisis (ACHCS084)
- Account for different interpretations and points of view (ACHCS085)

Communication and reflection:

- Present evidence-based civics and citizenship arguments using subject-specific language (ACHCS088)
- Reflect on their role as a citizen in Australian, regional and global contexts (ACHCS089)

Problem-solving and decision-making:

- Recognise and consider multiple perspectives and ambiguities, and use strategies to negotiate and resolve contentious issues (ACHCS086)
- Use democratic processes to reach consensus on a course of action relating to a civics or citizenship issue and plan for that action (ACHCS087)

Questioning and research

- Develop, select and evaluate a range of questions to investigate Australia's political and legal systems (ACHCS082)
- Identify, gather and sort information and ideas from a range of sources and reference as appropriate (ACHCS083)

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Glossary of useful terms

Active Citizenship: Involvement and informed participation in the civic and political activities of society at local, state, national, regional and global levels. It contrasts with 'passive citizenship' where citizens participate only minimally to meet their basic individual responsibilities including voting and paying taxes.

Activist: A person who takes steps to make social, political or environmental change happen relating to a cause or issue that they are passionate about.

Activism: the policy or action of using campaigning to bring about political or social change.

Act (of Parliament): a law made by Parliament; a bill which has passed all three readings in each house and has received the royal assent

Advocacy: public support for or recommendation of a particular cause or policy.

Australian Government, The: The national government of the Commonwealth of Australia, which is also known as the federal government or the Commonwealth Government. It was established by the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act at the time of Federation.

Bill: a proposal for a new law which has been presented to Parliament

Cabinet, The: The *Cabinet* consists of the most senior ministers, including the Prime Minister. The *Cabinet's* role is to make major policy decisions, including decisions about spending, appointments and introducing legislation.

Citizen: A person who holds citizenship of a polity, such as a country, and who is a member of a political community that grants certain rights and privileges to its citizens, and in return expects them to act responsibly such as to obey their country's laws. Also see global citizen.

Civics: A identifiable body of knowledge, skills and understandings relating to the organisation and working of society. It refers to a nation's political and social heritage, democratic processes, government, public administration and legal system.

Common Good: A term that is popularly understood as sharing of resources among a community for the benefit of that community as a whole. The common good is often seen as a utilitarian ideal representing the greatest possible good for the greatest possible number of individuals as opposed to the private good for individuals or sections of society.

Conservation: Conservation is careful management of the environment and natural resources, acknowledging that they may be changed in order to affect a better future for humankind, but not if the impacts on them are too great. Alternatively, preservation is an act of maintaining the existing condition of environmental areas as yet untouched by humans.

Constitution: A set of fundamental principles on which a state or other organisation (such as a club) is governed. Usually, this takes the form of a written legal document setting out specific powers for a government or governing of that entity.

Cost Benefit Analysis: Determination and evaluation of benefits and costs of a project or decision. The evaluation includes monetary and non-monetary effects.

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Democracy: A form of government where a decision-making power is vested in the people. In a democracy, the people or their elected representatives determine policy and/or laws. Equality of rights is a principle of democracy.

Direct Action: People participating in person and directly on issues they seek to change. Direct action may include activities, often non-violent but possibly violent, targeting people, groups, institutions, actions, or property that its participants deem objectionable. Non-violent direct action may include civil disobedience, sit-ins, strikes, and counter-economics.

Ecosystem: A functioning unit of nature defined by a complex set of relationships among its living organisms (such as microorganisms, plants, animals, humans) and its nonliving components (such as water, minerals, soil, air), where all organisms and components are interdependent through nutrient cycles and energy flows. Every unit can be explored at macro levels (such as the planet) or as specific limited areas.

Endangered (species): a species of animal or plant that is seriously at risk of extinction.

Global Citizen: A person who understands their rights and responsibilities at a global level; that is, one's identity transcends geography or political borders, and rights and responsibilities are derived from being human. However, these rights and responsibilities do not always have legal authority or sanctions of those conferred by a nation.

Governance: A process and rules by which decisions are made and implemented within entities such as national and state governments, corporations and other organisations.

Human–Environment Systems Thinking: A method of analysing complex interactions between an environment and people, which is able to integrate environmental with attitudinal, demographic, social, economic, technological and political factors. Systems thinking seeks to understand the whole rather than its parts, and see patterns of change over time rather than just as a snapshot in time. The drivers–pressures–state–impact–response (DPSIR) model used in the Australian State of the Environment report (SoE 2011) is an example of a human–environment system. Systems can be extended to include elements, for example, values and beliefs.

Mandate: A political doctrine that derives its meaning from political philosophy, political behaviour and political morality, not from constitutions or other laws. It concerns the implied approval to act in a particular way on a public issue given by the electorate to its representative or government.

Media: Forms of communication between a source and receivers including television, radio, print media and the internet, as well as forms of social media. The term usually refers to mass media and the ability of media to inform and influence people. Media are key players in democracies where citizens need to be informed, influenced and open to a diversity of views.

Minister: a member of Parliament who is a member of the executive government, and who is usually in charge of a government department

Non-government Organisation (NGO): A group that is organised at a local, national or international level around a common interest and on a non-profit, voluntary basis. NGOs mostly operate independently of a government, but may be funded by a government and still maintain their independence.

Policy: Policy is a law, regulation, procedure, administrative action, incentive, or voluntary practice of governments and other institutions. Policy decisions are frequently reflected in resource allocations.

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Prime Minister: the head of the national government, the chief minister in some countries, including Australia

Protest: a statement or action expressing disapproval of or objection to something. E.g. "the team lodged an official protest".

Rehabilitation: the action of restoring a person, animal or ecosystem to health or normal life through after any sort of damage or injury has been occurred.

Restoration: the action of returning something to a former condition.

Rights and Responsibilities: Entitlements and obligations that are associated with living in Australia. Rights and responsibilities are a cornerstone of modern democracies. While all people in Australia enjoy certain rights (for example, freedom of speech), there are also responsibilities (for example, paying taxes, jury service). Citizens also have the right to vote and the responsibility of voting at elections.

Statute: In Australia, a *statute* is a written *law*, also known as an act of parliament or legislation, which commences as a bill, is passed by the parliament and has received royal assent (by the *Governor-General* or a governor, or, in very rare cases, directly by the monarch). A *statute* may commence upon royal assent, or a specified date, or upon a date declared in a proclamation. Also see *common law*.

Self-Advocacy: an individual's ability to communicate effectively, convey, negotiate or assert their interests, know their rights and responsibilities, make choices and decisions and take responsibility for themselves and their decisions

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Sustainability: An ongoing capacity of an *environment* to maintain all life, whereby the *needs* of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their *needs*.

Westminster System: A system of parliamentary government, also known as responsible government, which evolved in England and was adopted in its colonies, including Australia. It is based on the principle that the executive government is responsible to the people through the parliament. The executive government is formed by those who command the support of the lower House of Parliament. Ministers, including the Prime Minister, are members of a House of Parliament and are accountable to it. There is a separate, largely ceremonial, head of state, an independent public service and an independent judiciary that applies the rule of law.

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